

1st September 2026

Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP
Prime Minister
No 10 Downing Street
London

Dear Prime Minister

We write with respect to ask for your attention to a matter of significant public concern: the modernisation of UK airspace and its potential impact on communities across the country.

The Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill [HL], currently before Parliament, includes provisions relating to airspace change and the conferral of new rule-making powers on the Civil Aviation Authority. While we recognise the need for a safe, efficient and modern aviation system, we are deeply concerned that the proposed framework may leave residents on the ground without sufficient independent recourse when flight path changes have serious and lasting effects on their homes, health and quality of life.

This is not about airport expansion.

The Bill supports the Government's policy of redesigning UK flight paths through the UK Airspace Design Service and gives the Civil Aviation Authority an expanded role in the airspace change process. Our concern is not with modernisation itself, but with the absence of a balanced and independent mechanism through which affected communities can seek review, remedy or intervention when decisions cause disproportionate harm.

At present, residents affected by aircraft noise may have very limited practical means of challenge once an airspace change has progressed through the consultation process (CAP1616). We are concerned that the proposed arrangements could further reduce the ability of citizens to request ministerial intervention, pursue meaningful appeal, or obtain independent scrutiny of decisions that may affect thousands of people for ever.

Communities living beneath concentrated flight paths (new and existing) may experience increased noise, sleep disturbance, anxiety, loss of amenity and the devaluation of homes. These impacts are not minor inconveniences; for many households they alter daily life, wellbeing & mental health and the peaceful enjoyment of their property. It is therefore essential that decisions about airspace change are subject to clear accountability, transparent evidence and independent oversight.

We therefore respectfully ask you, as Leader of the Labour Party, to support the creation of an independent airspace change ombudsman or equivalent oversight body outside of the CAA. Such a body would provide affected residents with a fair route to raise concerns, ensure that the CAA and airspace change sponsors are properly accountable, and help restore public confidence that the interests of communities on the ground are being weighed alongside the commercial and operational interests of aviation.

We believe that a modern airspace system must not be achieved at the expense of fairness, health or democratic accountability. The redesign of flight paths should reflect a balanced approach, taking proper account of the lived experience of residents as well as the needs of passengers, airports and the wider aviation sector.

Without independent oversight, both newly affected communities and those already enduring significant aircraft noise may face greater concentration of flights over the same homes by day and night, with little effective means of redress.

This request is important to us because the consequences of aircraft noise extend beyond inconvenience. Prolonged exposure can place strain on mental health, family life, sleep and general wellbeing. When citizens feel powerless to challenge decisions that materially affect their lives, that sense of injustice can itself deepen the harm experienced.

We appreciate the many demands on your time and ask that the Labour Party give serious consideration to this issue as part of its wider commitment to fairness, public health, environmental responsibility and democratic accountability.

If it is possible for this matter to receive your consideration, we would be most grateful. We would also be pleased to provide any further information that may assist, including a short briefing prepared for members of the House of Commons.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this letter and the concerns of residents who may be profoundly affected by changes to the skies above their homes.

Yours sincerely

1. CAGNE – Communities Against Gatwick Noise Emissions
2. Aviation Environment Federation - international
3. HACAN – London Heathrow
4. HACAN East – City Airport
5. GALBA (the Group for Action on Leeds Bradford Airport)
6. Aircraft Noise Action (Newcastle)
7. No Airport Expansion - national
8. Bristol Airport Action Network
9. Campaign to Protect Rural England Surrey
10. CPRE London
11. CPRE Sussex
12. CPRE Kent
13. CPRE Hampshire
14. CPRE Lancashire
15. Luton And District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise
16. Farnborough Noise Group
17. Teddington Action Group - London
18. Friends of the Earth Southampton
19. People Against Intrusive Noise - Luton

20. East Twickenham Heathrow Campaign
21. Parish Councils Airport Association – 28 Town and Parish Councils in the Bristol area
22. South-West Essex Fight the Flights (SWSXFTF)